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JABEZ BUNTING



JAMES HARRISON RIGG

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To
Mr
Eugene
from
your Father
Christmas
1915

AN
(Bunting, J.)
Riggs



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EDITED BY

REV. JOHN TELFORD, B.A.

JABEZ BUNTING



Yrs very affect. ly,
Jabez Punting

JABEZ BUNTING

A GREAT METHODIST
LEADER

BY

REV. JAMES HARRISON RIGG, D.D.

THE METHODIST BOOK CONCERN.
NEW YORK — CINCINNATI.

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P R E F A C E

No one can feel more deeply than the writer how inadequate is the little book he has written, when critically regarded as a life-sketch of the greatest man of middle Methodism, to whose gifts and character organized Wesleyan Methodism throughout the world owes incomparably more than to any other man. With more space a better book might and ought to have been made. But to bring the book within reach of every intelligent and earnest Methodist youth and of every working man's family, a very cheap volume was necessary, and therefore a very small one. The writer has done his best, accordingly, to meet the views of the Methodist Publishing House in this matter.

He knows how great and serious are some of the deficiencies in this record ; especially

on the side of Methodist Foreign Missions, as to which he has said nothing, though Jabez Bunting in this field was the prime and most influential organizer in all the early years of our Church's Connexional mission work and world-wide enterprises. The subject was too large and wide, too various and too complicated, to be dealt with in a section of a small book. It is, besides, *the* ever-various and far-reaching theme, in these later as in earlier times of our Church history, of those universally extended public missionary meetings which Dr. Bunting may be said to have taken the chief part in organizing, and which are now more than ever before prized and sustained in our Methodism of to-day.

JAMES H. RIGG.

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INTRODUCTION

DURING the first half of the last century Dr. Bunting was, by universal consent, recognized as the most influential minister of his own Church, and as occupying a very high, if not the highest, place among the Nonconformist leaders of his own time. Not that he sought such recognition, or ever affected the style or manner of a Nonconformist leader ; the preferment was informal, but was his by general consent.

He was providentially destined to greatness as a leader of his fellows, but yet he was born in a low social position. Nor did he attain to eminence as a Church leader by any great stroke or special method of his own. In his youth, indeed, his talents and scholarly diligence had raised him to a position and prospects which would have warranted the

confident expectation for him of a high professional career ; but he sacrificed that position, with all that it promised, for conscience' sake, to enter upon the hard work, and still harder poverty, with which was very often coupled at that time more than a little of social ostracism, that were the lot of a Methodist itinerant preacher a hundred years ago. From this beginning he won his way, in after life, by modest and devoted service, first to the confidence and high appreciation of his fellow labourers as Methodist preachers, and afterwards to the general esteem and admiration of evangelical workers in every class of society. As Wesleyan Methodism grew into wider and still widening acceptance and influence, his fame and personal influence continually increased. The reluctance of a modesty which welcomed work and service, but in his earlier years shrank from official position and distinction, was overborne by the appreciation of his brethren, both older and younger ; until at length, while still in middle life, he could not but accept the position for which he was providentially destined, and, as the leading minister of his own evangelistic Church, was

lifted into pre-eminence among the evangelical communities of England. He was elected President of the Wesleyan Conference while still in the prime of his life, and by re-election held that office four times—in 1820, 1828, 1836, 1844. His funeral was an occasion of almost national mourning.

JABEZ BUNTING

CHAPTER I

YOUTH AND EARLY MANHOOD

IT will be my first attempt, in this sketch of Dr. Bunting's youth and earlier manhood, to trace in slight outline the course of his life, before he was 'called' to the Christian ministry.

Jabez Bunting was of Derbyshire parentage. His father was a tailor of Monyash, in the 'Peak' of the county, who moved to Manchester in middle life—a man of feeble physique, but a Christian man. He was a Methodist, who knew the value of a good education; and, though he was poor, he sent his son to the best day-school in Manchester.

His wife, whose maiden name was Mary Redfern, was a superior woman, a godly Methodist, much esteemed for her Christian principles and firm good sense.

The story of Jabez Bunting's life begins properly with the visit to Monyash of a Methodist preacher of more than ordinary gifts for his itinerant vocation, John Bennet. He described his 'circuit'—or, in old Methodist vernacular, his 'round'—as one hundred and fifty miles, in two weeks, during which he preached thirty-four times, besides meeting the 'Societies' and visiting the sick—Derbyshire, Lancashire, and Cheshire being the principal scenes of his labours. This evangelist visited Monyash, where Mary Redfern heard him preach, and was so impressed by the word, that she forthwith joined the Methodist Society, and became thenceforth a devoted follower of Wesley.¹

¹ The history of John Bennet is, in part, the history of John Wesley, because of Bennet's marriage with Grace Murray, who, but for the opposition of his brother Charles, would have become the wife and fellow helper of John Wesley. Bennet became the head of a minor Methodist offshoot, known in Lancashire as Independent Methodists.

Years afterwards, one of Wesley's preachers, riding across country from the Methodist Conference at Leeds to take ship for America, as one of the first preachers sent there by Wesley, called at Monyash, and preached in the Methodist preaching-room from the striking text in 1 Chron. iv. 9, 'And Jabez was more honourable than his brethren.' That sermon made a deep impression on Mary Redfern, and the text evermore rested in her memory. When by her marriage she had become Mary Bunting, and a son had been born to her, she called his name Jabez, mindful of the sermon she had heard years before, and of the prayer and the promise connected with the name (1 Chron. iv. 9, 10). Her son Jabez may be said, in a spiritual sense, to have enjoyed that blessing.

The course and character of the son's life were determined by the removal of his father to Manchester, presumably through his physical weakness and to escape from the bitter winter climate of the Peak. He lived in Newton Lane, Manchester, where his son Jabez was born on the evening of Ascension Day, May 13, 1779; he was baptized at the

Collegiate Church, now the cathedral of that city, on the 18th of July following. The father died before he was an old man, but by sending his son to the best school in Manchester, where the sons of professional gentlemen received their education, he did, in effect, determine the development of his son's mind and character, and put him on the line of intellectual progress and social culture and elevation, which, combined with the influence of the spirit and fellowship of Wesleyan Methodism, and the converting power of true religion, led to the remarkable history and world-wide influence which made Jabez Bunting the greatest leader of Methodism in the century that followed the death of Wesley.

The school in Manchester was conducted by a Presbyterian minister, and among the scholars was the son of the eminent physician and publicist, Dr. Percival, at that time the most distinguished citizen of Manchester and one of the most celebrated men of scientific culture and general knowledge in England. Young Percival and the tailor's son were class-mates and intimate friends, and, as a consequence, when the boys had

finished their course at school, in fine disregard of social prejudices, the tailor's son entered the family of Dr. Percival, probably the most refined and truly liberal household in Manchester. As Dr. Percival's valued pupil and amanuensis; his son's intimate friend; the friend also, then and thereafter through life, of his daughters; the trusted and beloved inmate of that charming and cultivated household: Jabez finished his education as an English citizen and gentleman, and a professional man. He was a member of that household when he was converted as a Christian believer, in the strictest evangelical sense. He was still a member of the same household when he offered himself for the ministry of the 'people called Methodists,' and was accepted on probation. This took place in the last year of the eighteenth century, Jabez Bunting being at the time twenty years of age.

Jabez Bunting remained the valued friend of Dr. Percival through the life of that eminent man, who appointed him one of his executors. He was the friend and correspondent, sometimes the counsellor, of the daughters after their father's death. The

remarkable tone and aspect of gentlemanly and scholarly breeding which distinguished Dr. Bunting in after life, and made him always at home in good society, whether of higher or lower rank, was no doubt largely due to his intimate association as a youth with Dr. Percival and his family. The clear and pure English, free from all note of provincialism, whether 'country' or 'cockney,' which he spoke, and his excellent style, equally manly and scholarly, as a speaker and writer, must also have been due very much to his training as Dr. Percival's pupil and secretary. He gave up his hopes and his more than fair prospects, as a medical student, for the poverty and wearing labours of a Methodist itinerant preacher. But all that he had learned from Dr. Percival, and all that he sacrificed when he enlisted as servant and soldier of Christ in the life of a Methodist preacher, served directly to prepare him for his calling as a Christian minister and an evangelical leader in the Wesleyan Methodist Church.

The boy Jabez had, as a matter of course, in that primitive period of Wesleyan Methodism, been trained, not only in Methodist

doctrine and rules of godly life, but as an attendant at the morning service of the parish church, where he had been baptized by the parish clergyman. But he had also from childhood gone with his parents to the Methodist preaching-house, his mother carrying him from a very early age, not only to the preaching in the evening, but to the lovefeast in the afternoon or evening, a 'means of grace' in which the early Methodists specially delighted.

On this latter point hung a matter of importance for his after life. Whilst Joseph Benson, the preacher, divine, and commentator, was stationed at Manchester, the boy, who by this time had fully arrived at an age of moral accountability and, indeed, of bright intelligence, was still received with his mother into the quarterly lovefeast of the Society, though by rule none but decided believers or earnest seekers after Christ and His salvation were admitted, by show of a proper ticket, to that peculiarly sacred and confidential service. When Mr. Benson, however, had removed from Manchester to another 'circuit,' and Mr. Mather, an able Scotchman and one of the most influential

and exact in discipline among the ministers—one who, like Benson himself, had been elected, and indeed then was, President of the Conference—succeeded Benson as superintendent of the Manchester Circuit, he refused to allow Jabez, by this time a youth in his teens, to accompany his mother to this sacred Society gathering. This circumstance made a great impression on the boy, as it had deeply touched his mother. The result was his definite decision for Christ and His service—or, to use Methodist language, his full and convinced ‘conversion.’ In later life he said, ‘Many attribute their conversion to their having attended a lovefeast. I attribute mine to having been shut out of one.’ This was a lesson for all his life to one who, in after years, had need to guard sacredly the lesson for his Church of firmly, though patiently and equitably, maintaining its rules of Christian order and principle.

The lad received a note of admission on trial into the ‘Methodist Society’—the Wesleyan Methodist Church—in September 1794, being fifteen years of age. At the same time, his intimate and life-long friend, James Wood, joined the Society, and, after

filling many offices of trust in Methodism, died in its fellowship, having founded an influential family, which to this day cleaves to the same Church, serving it with steadfast loyalty. James Wood was an eminent citizen of Manchester, and the first president of the Manchester Chamber of Commerce; he was also a county magistrate. Through all his more mature life he was also a class-leader, as well as a local preacher, in the Methodist Church.¹

It is proper here to note that, though Dr. Percival, whilst a Presbyterian by religious profession, was, like most of the English Presbyterians of this period, an Arian in his professed creed, nevertheless, when his pupil had taken the step of entering the Methodist ministry, he sent him a kind and cordial letter, and with it a generous gift to enable him to buy books to help him in his studies for his vocation. He was nearly connected by marriage with the eminent Irish divine, Archbishop Magee, whose learned and able work on the cardinal

¹ Dr. Bunting in after life attributed to Benson's ministry his decisive 'awakening' to the spiritual life. Mather brought him to final decision.

Christian doctrines of Atonement and Sacrifice was for many years the most generally valued standard authority on that great subject. When a copy of that work was needed for Mr. Benson's use as Methodist editor, and, the work being out of print, was not to be procured, Dr. Percival took great pains to obtain the only copy, as it would seem, that could be had, through his kind offices with the Archbishop, and sent it to his former secretary, for his use on behalf of Mr. Benson and the Methodist Book-Room. That Mr. Bunting's religious influence was beneficial in the family of Dr. Percival may be probably inferred from the fact that nearly all the members of the large family circle became serious adherents of the Church of England, and so remained through life, retaining to the end their warm friendship for their father's secretary and executor.

It might have been anticipated, from the position which Jabez Bunting occupied in the family of Dr. Percival, that his course for the future was plain before him. He was already known as a young and earnest Methodist, a fact which raised no prejudice against him in the mind of his principal.

The prospect was that in due time he would become a partner with the doctor, and the guardian of his family and their interests. Writing a few years after this to a brother minister, a townsman of Mr. Bunting's, Joseph Entwisle, who was twice elected President of the Conference, and was doubtless the minister of all others the most beloved and venerated by his brethren, said that Mr. Bunting had sacrificed great prospects in the medical profession when he became a Methodist minister. Such was certainly the case. He might have continued to serve as a local preacher, and to work side by side in Methodism with his intimate friend James Wood until, while Mr. Wood was president of the Manchester Chamber of Commerce, his friend would have come to be recognized as one of the leading physicians of Manchester, and the successor, as well as the executor and trustee, of Dr. Percival. In such a case he might well have become the most influential Methodist, and at the same time one of the leading citizens, of Manchester. Such a future was undoubtedly more than a possibility in the case of so strong and gifted a man as Jabez Bunting, if he had retained

his connexion with Dr. Percival and succeeded to his professional position, though always a Methodist. Such a future, indeed, was a more natural and probable outlook for him, according to business possibilities and prospects, than any other. Nevertheless, he deliberately turned away and took up the work and profession of a Methodist itinerant preacher, with the poverty, the social inferiority, and the severe toil and continual self-sacrifice which such a calling could not but involve, knowing full well all that it meant for himself, and the continued hardship that would be the lot of his mother and sisters. In so doing he left the obvious and easy path for the difficult and uncertain—and at all events the hard and self-denying—lot of a Methodist preacher. It is impossible to explain or understand this result in any other way than by recognizing the ‘call’ of Providence, for higher than earthly interests and reasons, to ‘leave all’ and become a minister of Christ’s gospel to the common people of England. How, by what means and instrumentality, he was led to the conviction that he was called to become a Methodist home missionary—such in effect

in its earliest aspect was his vocation—is an interesting and instructive inquiry.

It may be presumed, to begin with, that the influence of his excellent and devoted mother had much to do with her son's deliberate choice of the work and life of a Methodist itinerant preacher. From the time when, under the influence of Mr. Mather, he joined the 'Society,' the mother who had taken him in his earliest years to the Methodist preaching and the lovefeasts must have borne him continually in her mind and on her heart as belonging to Christ and Methodism, and her example and influence must have laid deep hold of him. He was her Jabez, and she looked forward to his fulfilling, in a high and holy sense, the word of Scripture which had dwelt in her mind and on her heart. Accordingly, when, as a mere youth, he began to deliver addresses to young people, and to take an interest in their conduct and pursuits, his mother would naturally begin to surmise what work for Christ her son might be called upon to do. Besides which, his father's house was situated very near to the superintendent minister's house, in Oldham Street Chapel yard, the inmates of which,

Mr. Percival Bunting informs us in the volume from which I have already quoted, took kindly to their neighbour's polite and promising son, who 'went in and out of their dwelling almost at his pleasure.' Thus he drank in influences higher, stronger, and more congenial than even the studies and the society with which he became familiar at the home of his schoolfellow and friend, and in the circle of which Dr. Percival was the centre. Such influences drew him with increasing strength and with growing spiritual inspiration towards the work of the gospel ministry as a 'Methodist preacher,' with all its toil and worldly disadvantages.

When he was but a boy of seventeen, it is notable, and was, as it were, prophetic of his future vocation, that he became the founder of 'A Society for the acquirement of religious knowledge consisting of young men of the Methodist Connexion in Manchester,' the rules of which, composed and written out by himself, were contained in a book lent to his son and biographer. Among the objects of the Society was 'improvement in religious knowledge, experience, and practice,' and every sixth meeting was to be employed 'in

exercises wholly and distinctly of devotion.' The minute-book of this Society records what was probably his first attempt to expound Holy Scripture. 'Thursday morning,' so the minute reads, 'Brother Rea being detained by indisposition, the president, J. Bunting, read the first chapter of the Epistle to the Romans, which afforded matter for conversation.'

A little later in this early stage of Methodist circuit organization in Manchester, we find Jabez Bunting, still in his teens, taking an active part in the working of the Prayer Leaders' Association of Manchester Methodism, which, in effect, was a branch of the Methodist home missionary agency of that time for bringing awakening gospel truth into contact with the working classes throughout the country. In Manchester this agency was powerfully worked, and in 1796 Jabez Bunting was its secretary, as appears from a document he left behind entitled 'A Plan of the Methodist Sunday Evening Prayer-meetings in Manchester,' for the September quarter, 1798, a relic which bears the signature, 'Jabez Bunting, 35, Church Street, Secretary.' This plan gives the names of

212 prayer-leaders—a large proportion of the Society members, who regularly visited sixty-four places in the town and neighbourhood.

The transition of a youth so active and diligent as this secretary of the prayer-leaders, and at the same time so well educated and gifted, to the work of a local preacher must have been easy and natural, and could not fail to take place speedily. There is evidence to show it was in 1798, when he was nineteen years old, that he made his earliest attempts in the way of extemporaneous address to a congregation in the open air. At a later period in that year he preached his first sermon at a village—now, no doubt, absorbed—between Manchester and Blackley, when a number of his friends gathered round him, who were greatly impressed with the maturity and effectiveness of the sermon. He was employed as local preacher eleven months, during which period he preached fourteen sermons. After fully weighing the reasons *pro* and *con*, as to which he left behind a comprehensive logical enumeration and statement of the arguments, and the balance which determined his conclusion, he

consented gladly to his being proposed in the Manchester Quarterly Meeting as a candidate for the Methodist itinerant ministry at the ensuing Conference, 1799.

This was indeed a disinterested choice. He relinquished the assured prospect of pecuniary competence and professional distinction for a life of severe toil and narrow means. By his father's death in 1797, leaving no property behind him, Jabez was left alone to care for his mother and two sisters. A letter from the son to his clever and helpful sister—the other sister was a helpless invalid—in regard to the treatment of their father in the last stage of his physical decline, shows with what dutiful care the youth of eighteen gave minute directions for the tendance and nourishing of his father during the latest weeks of his life, when he had to leave Manchester for the fresher air of Macclesfield, with his daughter to nurse him, helped by such aid and allowances as the mother and son could provide for him. This letter is given in Dr. Bunting's biography, and there is in it evidence of professional care as well as of filial affection.

The father lived only three months after

the letter was written. On his death Jabez became the stay of the family, as far as his own limited means enabled him so to be. He gave all he could spare to help his mother and sisters. When, after two years had passed, the poor youth became a poor Methodist preacher, he gave his mother one-half of his circuit allowances, and he continued so to do as long as she lived. Happily, his mother was a woman greatly esteemed both by the Manchester ministers and by the Oldham Street Chapel trustees and leading friends, and thus in various ways help came to the clever, old-fashioned, and truly primitive Methodist widow, with her inverted coal-scuttle bonnet. The Methodists of Oldham Street, like the City Road Methodists, had been well taught by Wesley and the old preachers to care for the faithful and needy members of the flock, and could not but take proper care of and find more or less of suitable employment in connexion with the chapel or the Society, for such a notable woman as the Widow Bunting. Her influence throughout upon the principles and character of her son must have been excellent.

In referring to the means of training which

went to the preparation of the youth for his work as a Wesleyan minister, the influence of the preachers stationed in Manchester, and especially the superintendents who resided in the chapel house, must not be lost sight of. The dwelling-house of the Bunting family was situated in a back or side street, near the chapel yard and the superintendent's house. The three superintendent pastors who occupied that house during the critical period of the lad's education and the development of his character, were all three great and presidential men—Joseph Benson, Alexander Mather, and William Thompson. Samuel Bradburn was President of the Conference and also superintendent of Manchester while Jabez was stationed at Oldham. The young probationer made it a rule to ride over to hear him on the week-night at Oldham Street Chapel, so that he met him nearly every week.

Bradburn was a genius and great man, though of an excitable temperament. All these distinguished men took a special interest in their young friend; from all of them he learned wisdom, the wisdom of wide experience as well as of superior intelligence.

These men, also, by a final unison of judgment and counsel, which followed upon marked diversities of feeling and tendency, may be said to have done more than any others to settle the basis of final agreement in the Conference and among the circuits and Societies as to some cardinal points of Connexional controversy, affecting not only the internal discipline of the Connexion, but the relations of Wesleyan Methodism with the Church of England.

Manchester was nearer the centre of gravity for Methodism after Wesley's death than even London, as, apart from Wesley's personal presence and special influence, Wesleyan Methodism had taken a stronger and deeper hold of the population of the northern counties than the special points of London and City Road Methodism had of the Connexion generally, whether in the North or South of England. The influence of Manchester, accordingly, and its ministers, especially as the successive superintendents were men of so great Connexional influence, told powerfully upon the Connexion during the unsettled period which followed the death of Wesley. Even more than Bristol, which was so imbued

with Wesleyan influence, or than City Road, John Wesley's own home, Manchester, being the focus of the Methodist influences of the north, was the true centre at this period of Methodist energy and feeling for the provinces generally; and what was in Lancashire the strong set of the tide of feeling was likely in the end to prevail generally in the Connexion. Benson, who, first of all, had religiously influenced Jabez Bunting as a youth, was a Church Methodist, and, if he could have had his way, some episcopal form of government would probably have prevailed in the Connexion; and, in particular, the societies would have still looked to the clergy of the Establishment for the sacraments. Alexander Mather, who succeeded Benson in Manchester, an able preacher and strong-willed Scotchman, desired a Presbyterian form of government, and an entire separation as soon as possible from the Church of England and its clergy. William Thompson, though not to be compared with Benson as a pulpit power or a learned theologian, nor with Mather as an able, all-round preacher and divine, was a man of acute and statesman-like mind, and with a wider experience of

Church organizations than either of them. He was, indeed, for the immediate need of Methodism, in the crisis following Wesley's death, perhaps superior to any other minister as a statesmanlike counsellor, and, among the senior brethren, was generally recognized as the man of the hour, the leader needed by Methodism. Benson was an Englishman of the north country, Mather was a Scotchman, Thompson an Irishman, but an Irishman who had been freely employed by Wesley in England and Scotland as well as Ireland, being appointed where his gifts as a judicious pastor as well as good preaching faculty were specially needed. An Irishman from the county of Fermanagh, who, as a Methodist preacher, knew England and Scotland as well as Ireland, he was well acquainted with the leading forms of Church polity, and from his youth up had been familiar with Presbyterianism no less than Episcopacy; and he had thought out a plan for the government of Methodism after Wesley's death which excluded Episcopacy in any form. His sympathies and judgement led him to prefer some liberal form of Presbyterianism, and he had in accordance with this idea framed a scheme

for the collective government of the Methodist Societies after Wesley's death, of which he lost no time in giving an outline by means of a circular letter, which made a decisive impression in the Connexion, and which was known as the 'Halifax Circular.'*

It was believed by some that Wesley had inclined towards such a form of Episcopacy as he had already established in America, and under which Dr. Coke held on that side of the Atlantic a sort of episcopal authority, in concert with Asbury, himself one of Wesley's preachers. But what was a necessary arrangement for an immense territory of vast distances was not suitable for a small island, where the Societies were not separated by hundreds of miles from each other; and Wesley never committed himself in counsel or suggestion so far as to indicate a judgement that the American plan would suit England.

Dr. Coke, himself a deacon of the Church of England, was probably disappointed that English Methodism was not organized episcopally, and there is no doubt that at a somewhat later period he thought that Irish

* His election as first President of the Conference followed.

Methodism might be episcopally organized, and that he might find his sphere there. But his world-wide missionary passion eclipsed that idea, and his generous and impulsive heart was, not a great many years later, quenched for this life in the Indian Ocean.

Meantime, the plan of Thompson and his associates, among whom one of the ablest was Bradburn, took hold of Methodism. In an admirable pamphlet Mr. Bradburn sketched a general idea of Presbyterianism such as, avoiding the objectionable points of the Scotch Church model, might meet the needs of Methodism. On this general basis, accordingly, Methodism was organized at the Conference of 1792, a year after Wesley's death, Thompson being chosen the first President of the Conference. Mr. Bradburn, we have seen, was President of the Conference and superintendent of Oldham Street in the year 1799, when the probationary ministry of Jabez Bunting began. Mr. Mather had been President in the year 1798, during his superintendency of Manchester.

What has now been said, it should be added, does not include all that Mr. Thompson did towards the settlement of ecclesiastical

questions and principles in Methodism. There was a correlated question of great difficulty, and one which threatened a very serious schism, that had to be settled after the plan of itinerant District superintendents had been withdrawn, and that of itinerant District Chairmen, stationed in circuits and elected year by year, had been adopted. The other question to which I refer related to the administration of the sacraments. Here also Mr. Thompson bore a leading part. The principle was adopted that in every Society in any circuit in which a majority of the trustees of any chapel, and also a majority of the leaders' meeting, concurred in desiring the sacraments to be administered by the stationed ministers, the sacraments should be administered to the members by the preachers of the circuit in Full Connexion. This decision healed a very threatening schism and permanently solved a question of profound importance—settled it once and for all. The same man was thus a principal instrument in settling the two greatest and gravest questions which threatened the peace and unity—it might be said, the very existence—of Methodism after the death of Wesley.

It was after these questions had been thus settled that, Bradburn having been elected President of the Conference and appointed to the Oldham Street Circuit, Jabez Bunting was admitted on trial as a minister and appointed to the Oldham circuit, within easy reach of his parents, of Oldham Street Chapel, and of the week-night ministrations of Samuel Bradburn.

For many long years the deepest feeling of need in the mind of Jabez Bunting for Methodism related to the education—the training and instruction—of candidates for the ministry ; nor did he rest till, after forty years, he saw his idea taking form and becoming fact by the creation of theological institutions. From the beginning of his ministry he ceased not to cry out for the supply of this lack. Nevertheless, he had himself had a very valuable training indeed, without which he could never have become what he was for his Church : the intellectual training of the Manchester Academy, the influence of the family and professional training of Dr. Percival, and—working in with these and following after them—the class-meetings, the prayer-meetings, his ex-

temporaneous preaching as a local preacher, and the intimacy he enjoyed with such theologians, such preachers, such masters of ecclesiastical principle and discipline, as these four great men—Presidents of the Conference, preachers, pastors, theologians, ecclesiastical leaders—with whom, in succession, during the most susceptible and intellectually alert years of his life, he was brought into close and confidential association.

In one respect especially Jabez Bunting needed little or nothing that such a college for probationers could have given him. His native genius, guided, disciplined, and developed by his classical education, including the excellent practice of translation and composition, his assiduous practice as amanuensis and secretary to Dr. Percival, and his constant exercise in the way of conversation, in pure and correct English, with the members and friends of the Percival family, had trained him in a steady habit of using in familiar conversation the English of the best-educated Englishmen, so that it became his ready and natural speech for all occasions and throughout his life. Hence from his youth up he had no difficulty or hesitation in expressing him-

self always and instinctively in pure English in the manner of the best-bred English families, and of scholars who were neither pedants nor tainted with vulgarity. He had learnt habitually to use language equally intelligible to gentle and simple, to scholars and working men. Such experience and training made it easy for him to explain, or argue, or appeal, alike in public or privately, without laboured memoriter preparation.

What has now been noted must be borne in mind when we think of the saying often repeated by Mr. Wood, his early friend and fellow townsman, that he never heard Dr. Bunting preach better than when he preached his trial sermon as a local preacher at nineteen years of age. Throughout his life he was distinguished by the evangelical distinctness and 'unction' of his preaching, and, in particular, by the point and power of his 'applications.' He was, accordingly, by no means a raw or wholly untrained youth when he received his appointment to Oldham in 1799. Moreover, his keen personal sense of his youthful immaturity made him a very close observer and practical student of all the points of administration and Church

discipline which were raised by way of discussion where he was stationed, or by the ministers with whom he was brought into contact. Here, as in other points, his association with Dr. Percival had been of advantage to him. Maxims of civil polity and justice, as recognized in the writings and conversation of so eminent and equitable a publicist, became axioms for the guidance of his amanuensis in ecclesiastical matters. Nor was it very long, as to more than one point of administration, before he showed an acuteness and also a decision which surprised those who heard the words of the young Daniel who had ventured to give his opinion in a case of doubt or difficulty.

Before leaving the ground of Oldham, where he spent his first two years of probation, and passing on to Macclesfield, his second circuit, it may be observed that already invitations had begun to flow in to the probationer, who, however, for many years made it his rule to leave himself wholly in the hands of the Conference, and not to remain more than two years in any circuit. It is interesting, at the same time, to quote here a paragraph from a letter, already

referred to, dated October 24, 1800, of his townsman and intimate friend, Joseph Entwisle, relating to this period of Mr. Bunting's life.

‘Rode over the mountains to Oldham. There I met with Mr. Jabez Bunting, a townsman of mine. He left great prospects in the world, in the medical profession, to become a travelling preacher. He is going on his second year, is about twenty-one, is eminent for good sense, piety, and ministerial gifts, and promises great usefulness. Glory be to God!’

CHAPTER II

MACCLESFIELD

IN leaving the neighbourhood of Manchester and of south-west Yorkshire, as represented by Oldham, Mr. Bunting was on his way by Conference appointment, during the next four years, to other schools of Wesleyan tradition and sympathy, as represented by Macclesfield and London, his two successive appointments. He was thus enabled to broaden and carry forward his education in regard to the scope and outlook of the rising Church, in the organic development of which he was during more than one generation to take so leading a part. The master-influence of Thompson and Bradburn was more potent in the Methodist district he was leaving than in the circuits in which his next four years were to be spent. In Oldham Street Circuit the Societies had now for several years received the sacraments

from their own ministers, and the influence of such men as Thompson and Bradburn was in the ascendant. In the London New Chapel, City Road, at the present time so fitly called Wesley's Chapel, the traditions of the Wesleys were still sacred to many leading Methodists, to whom the thought of entire and permanent separation from the national Church was repugnant. And even in Macclesfield, a manufacturing and largely a working-class centre, special circumstances had given the Established Church a strong hold on the Methodist people. The parish clergyman was earnestly evangelical, and many of his congregation, who were never or very rarely absent on Sunday morning, and some of whom were large employers of labour, were Methodists. Among these Methodist leading citizens were counted several, among others the Ryles, whose names have since gathered sacred memories for their firm adherence as Churchmen—especially the late Dr. Ryle, Bishop of Liverpool—to the evangelical doctrines taught by Wesley and his preachers. The organist of the parish church, Mr. Maclardie, had been a personal friend of John Wesley, who, in his *Journal*,

makes particular mention of the exquisite taste and devotional feeling with which he touched his organ at a special point in the sacramental administration. His daughter, as it happened, was presently to become the wife of Jabez Bunting. It was natural that the trustees and leaders—that the Society generally—who worshipped in the Macclesfield Methodist chapel, should have no desire as yet to claim for themselves, as a right or privilege, the administration of the sacraments by their own ministers. Their place of worship on the Sunday morning was their parish church; at other times they worshipped or held lovefeasts in their own preaching-houses. Presently the new order would—it did—come; but as yet the old order prevailed. Indeed, the young preacher, not as yet received into ‘full connexion,’ was very soon about to propose marriage to the daughter of the organist, who presided so sympathetically at the organ in the church. The first circuit, accordingly, to which Mr. Bunting was appointed on leaving Lancashire was a not unsuitable stage on the way to City Road Chapel, where the sacraments were administered by a canonically ordained

episcopal clergyman, and where the rising young leader of his Church was to gain a comprehensive view of the principles that were to govern its development.

Macclesfield, however, was a wide and hard circuit, exceedingly trying to the health of a delicate young man. It embraced a considerable part of the Peak of Derbyshire and of the northern division of Cheshire. The winter rides tried his delicate constitution severely. The diet, also, of his country lodging homes was not always easy of digestion. Indeed, but for the wholesome bacon and the thin soft oatcake which he could generally count upon, he could scarcely have lived through his long country rides and the wintry weather. He owed very much to the motherly care of a good lady whose name and fame were long cherished in Macclesfield for her loving hospitality, and whose husband, Mr. Allen, left by will two good houses for the use of the two Methodist ministers stationed in the town, in one of which the writer's father lived for three years when he was stationed in the Macclesfield circuit fifty years ago.

During his term in the Macclesfield Circuit, the incumbency of a large church in the

town was offered to Mr. Bunting, with a pledge that, if he accepted the offer, episcopal orders would not be wanting. As a matter of course, the offer was courteously but absolutely declined.

A letter addressed to his friend and county-man, the Rev. George Marsden, afterwards President of the Conference, is suggestive. In the year before Mr. Bunting came to Macclesfield, Buxton had been separated from that circuit; and he seems to have disapproved of the separation, as unjust to that highly reputed health resort, and not to have been satisfied that it had been fairly brought about. The young man, therefore, still a probationer, though in his third year, writes thus to Mr. Marsden, who had just left the Macclesfield Circuit: 'You will oblige me by telling me frankly the whole history of the separation of Buxton from Macclesfield. Was it,' he asks, 'fairly and openly proposed and carried at the Quarterly Meeting? Did the Buxton friends then declare that they preferred union with the circuit, even though they could only have preaching from us'—i.e. no doubt, from the stationed ministers of Macclesfield—'once a fortnight;

and that they would be content with local preachers on the other Sunday ? Did they know of the proposed separation ; and might they have been heard against it, if they chose ? ' His son, in quoting this letter, says, ' I note this early instance of his regard for popular rights.'

The question of Mr. Bunting's marriage now pressed upon him. It was specially important because of the physical trials involved in the working of the circuit. He greatly needed proper home comforts and care ; he needed also some pecuniary help, that he might better assist his widowed mother and his sisters. He sent his mother always one-half of his circuit 'allowances,' which were not calculated to cover itinerant expenses of board and lodging and travelling, these being supposed to be provided for the itinerant 'rounder' by his hosts, as he travelled, or the Societies to which he preached and ministered. The payments made to him by the circuit stewards—his circuit 'allowances,' of which he kept and left behind him an exact account—never exceeded as a single man, his son informs us, forty pounds a year.

This question of his marriage was discussed by him in a large and elaborate memorandum, in which the *pros* and *cons* are set down with a matter-of-fact precision which is somewhat amusing, but at the same time deeply earnest. Its conscientiousness is strict, and quite unalloyed by anything like sentimentalism. He recognizes the objections as well as the inducements. Religious considerations find a due place, and he does not disguise the fact that the young lady's artistic taste in dress and her pleasant and witty humour might probably by some of his flock be regarded as objectionable. The reasons in favour of his proposing to her are ten in number ; on the other side are six. This array *pro* and *con* is prefaced by a condensed dissertation on the general question, ' Should he or should he not entertain the thought of marriage at all at that time ? ' Among the reasons which carry the point in favour of his marriage without needless delay, one is the delicate and interrupted state of his health. After weighing all the reasons, his decision was in the affirmative. He made his proposal, accordingly, after short delay, and was straightway accepted. His son adds his own

comment : ‘ Her dress, about which I must admit that she teased him during a courtship which both were glad to end, was, from motives alike of prudence and economy, adapted to the proprieties of his station. Her vivacity he foresaw would sometimes be misunderstood ; but it lit up a perpetual sunshine in his heart and household. Men of great spiritual wisdom courted her company ; timid young preachers sunned and strengthened themselves in the light of her loving and sagacious counsels ; and faltering Christians waited for a smile from her bright and kindly eye.’

If Jabez Bunting had hardships and poverty to bear in Macclesfield, he was not without some compensations. Mr. John Whitaker, an attendant at the Methodist chapel and the father-in-law afterwards of the gifted Congregational minister, Dr. M‘All, sent him a very generous donation, for which he returned thanks in a long and most grateful letter. This gift, and Dr. Percival’s letter and banknote sent to him at Oldham two years before, were timely and encouraging helps, and not only by their material value, but by their appeal to

his courage and aid to his modest self-respect, were cordial comforts to a needy young man.

It is interesting at this period of his life to find the young theological student acknowledging the loan by a friend in Halifax of the volumes in French of Bourdaloue's sermons, and in the same letter referring to Saurin's sermons in their native French. He also refers to Dr. White's Bampton Lectures, and gives other evidence of unusually wide and various reading for so young a man, being a Methodist preacher on probation. He was intimate with an able and excellent clergyman, Mr. Melville Horne, who had been a follower of Wesley, and received the Lord's Supper occasionally at his church in Macclesfield. At the end of his second year of probation he had nearly a hundred sermons ready for use, as he might require them, and during his four years at Oldham and Macclesfield he preached 1,348 sermons.

At the Conference of 1803, held at Manchester in his old familiar chapel in Oldham Street, Mr. Bunting and twenty-eight other young men stood in the front seats, round the gallery, his mother, who had been accustomed

to take him to the same sanctuary from his childhood, being present. Robert Newton stood among the twenty-eight. Joseph Bradford, who saw Wesley die, was President; Benson, Pawson, Coke, and other masters stood round him. Entwisle, Walter Griffith, Clarke, Barber, and other leading fathers in the Methodist Church, 'elders who had outlived Joshua,' were present in the Lancashire mother-church. How Jabez passed the ordeal of his examination we have no record to quote, except as to one point. When asked, 'Are you resolved to devote yourself wholly to God and His work?' he said, with a serious modesty, 'I habitually do,' to the great satisfaction of his assessors.

We learn from a letter to Miss Maclardie that, on the day of his examination, there had been a keen and prolonged controversy as to where he should be stationed for the year. 'After a long and warm debate,' he writes, the Conference 'confirmed by a considerable majority my appointment to London. . . . My mind is at present much pained in consequence of what passed on the subject. Such overstrained importunity about one

individual is productive of real injury to him whom it seems to honour.' He refers to petitions, such as were allowed at that time to be sent to the Conference and to be publicly read when the 'Stations' were considered. Petitions for his appointment had been sent from Manchester, Liverpool, and London, and had been hotly and at length discussed. He says, 'I am greatly mortified and distressed. Pray for me that the God of all comfort and grace may help and direct me.'

So Jabez Bunting was, in 1803, stationed as junior minister in London.

III

EARLY MINISTRY IN LONDON

IN view of the marriage now agreed upon with Miss Maclardie, it was not only necessary, but in many ways convenient, that Mr. Bunting should have gained an introduction to London Methodism and the society of the Metropolis before he brought his bride to a perfectly strange centre of society and of Church work. The social and political world of London scarcely differed more from the provincial and manufacturing life of Macclesfield than the Methodism of London differed from Macclesfield Methodism. London Methodism, indeed, was by no means homogeneous. There would be definable differences of tone and sympathy between City Road Methodism, with its Foundery traditions, and its City and East End constituency, and Queen Street and Lambeth Methodism, with their West Street and Lambeth traditions and their superior

tone of manners and culture. Nevertheless, the collective Methodism which traced its origin to the Foundery, now merged in its identity with the New Chapel at City Road, had for many years enjoyed the distinction of Charles Wesley's presence and influence, near the West End of London, and, to the end of his life, of John Wesley's traditional authority. This was still one collective seat of influence and centre of authority, identified in the general view, both Methodistically and nationally, with the New Chapel, City Road, where the central Society meetings were held, and with John Wesley's house in the chapel yard, where the superintendent of London Methodism held the place of authority.

Hence the daily morning service at five o'clock was still kept up at City Road, and after the early service on Sunday mornings the local preachers of the circuit—there being as yet no local preachers' printed preaching plan—breakfasted together with the superintendent and his colleagues at Wesley's house, and received their billets of preaching appointments for the day. This was for the young preacher a striking novelty. The

daily five-o'clock preaching service, though a *primaeval* rite of Wesley's original Methodism, and always insisted on where and when he himself was in evidence, had not been an established rule either in Manchester or Macclesfield, where, of late years, Wesley's visits had been rare and brief, his presence being more needed elsewhere. This primitive rule Jabez Bunting found very trying, and sometimes he failed to respond to it; on which occasions, in a generous and compassionate spirit, his superintendent, Mr. Taylor, with whom he lived, supplied his place. That service was kept up all the time he was in London, though sometimes the attendance did not exceed eight persons, and, indeed, occasionally fell short of that number.

Another special feature was the penitents' Saturday evening service, which was a real and influential means of grace. One of the ministers was expected to give an address at that meeting. I may mention that at Penzance, some forty years later, I found the old penitents' meeting still kept up, with an occasional address from a minister or a senior member. That meeting at

Penzance Joseph Carne, Esq., banker and J.P., the host and friend of Robert Southey, never failed to attend, and it was a real spiritual help, although Mr. Carne himself, a reserved though kindly and genial man, seldom spoke to the company present.

Another novelty was the large number of small preaching-rooms scattered over London and its suburban villages, which were regularly visited by the minister, and in most of which classes were met quarterly to receive their Society tickets by one of the ministers. The long walks to places as far distant as Brentford, Woolwich, Hampstead, Hornsey, were a burdensome part of London work. Another metropolitan peculiarity was the large number of dependent poor, especially in Spitalfields and the East End, and the small and obscure preaching-places, and the poor-visiting to be attended to on both sides of the river eastwards. Altogether a London appointment was very laborious, especially for the junior minister, who was a sort of man-of-all-work.

On the other hand, there were compensations. If the Methodist Societies in all

quarters of London included many poor, whose indigence exceeded that found elsewhere in the Societies, on the other hand the Societies maintained their poor funds with a generosity elsewhere unknown, and still exemplified in a surprising degree the strenuous and unwearied spirit of bountiful giving so characteristic of the Wesleys and their early followers. Besides which, if there were many poor to care for, there was a larger proportion than elsewhere among the Societies of Methodists who were not only well-to-do, but exceptionally intelligent and delightfully hospitable, worthy followers in all respects of John and Charles Wesley. Of wealthy Methodists, indeed, as I have intimated, there were comparatively few, though there were more than a few who might be considered well-to-do. But the combination of superior intelligence with devout piety and with sensibility was a characteristic feature of the Societies, both in the east central and in the western quarters of the Metropolis, both in City Road and the East End, and in Queen Street and Lambeth. The leaders' meetings of City Road and Queen Street dispensed generous

aid to the needy and deserving 'members of Society' throughout London, and perhaps the Queen Street Society, through its leaders' meeting, excelled in this respect even the old Society of City Road. So at least it appeared to Jabez Bunting, who on this account wrote high praise to Miss Maclardie as to Queen Street more especially, and likewise as to the superior cultivation, and with this the deep godliness, of the principal members of the leaders' meeting there. Here it was that he found his choicest social circle, among such families as the Butterworths, the Mortimers, Mrs. Bulmer, and others of hardly inferior excellence. There are notices of Lambeth Society which seem to show that, though on the other side of the river from Queen Street and having a separate leaders' meeting, the Society with its separate leaders' meeting was of considerable importance, and the leaders' meeting well organized. It is possible that Mr. Wesley's much beloved and esteemed Swedish friends, the Woolffs, 'the lonely family at Balham,' belonged to the Lambeth Society.

In London, however, there were in proportion far fewer wealthy members among the

Methodist Societies than there were wealthy citizens among the Nonconformists of London. The Dissenting Churches were directly descended from the Puritan or Nonconformist Churches of the Commonwealth—that is, from the merchants and citizens who were the main strength of the Parliamentary Party in London which had vanquished and expelled the Stuarts. Among them had been numbered such citizens, at once godly and wealthy, as Sir Thomas Abney, the friend of Dr. Watts. Dr. Stoughton tells us, in his *History of Religion in England under Queen Anne and the Georges* (vol. i. p. 223), that, apart from the Baptists, who were neither a feeble nor a poor religious community, there were in John Wesley's time in London not fewer than eighty Nonconformist chapels and meeting-houses, where the Methodists could only be said to have had, besides City Road and Queen Street Chapels, a few preaching-rooms, or very small chapels, and hardly more than one citizen of notable wealth. To this day, indeed, though there are more than a few wealthy Methodists in London, they do not furnish any considerable proportion of City merchants or manufac-

turers who take a leading part in the business or public life and distinctions which maintain the fame and national character of the great and ancient city centre of business and far-reaching influence among the commercial centres of the world. A hundred years ago the proportion was exceedingly small, and indeed was quite inappreciable, though the 'dissenting interest,' with London as its chief centre, was all through the eighteenth century one of the political forces with which all statesmen and all political parties had to reckon.

Of the very few rich and cultivated Methodists who might be counted in London a century ago, some—two, in particular, bearing the names of Woolff and Sundius—were foreigners, whilst of the remainder the majority were provincials who had come to London and had there joined the 'Society'; country people who had worked upward, and, retaining their Methodism, had become leading men in the Society; in all cases Christian people of energy and character. There was life and glow in the societies, and their leaders' meetings, in particular, set a fine example to the Connexion. Of these

facts we gather intimations from Mr. Bunting's journal and correspondence with Miss Maclardie. Of the ladies, Mr. Bunting thought Mrs. Bulmer, the poetess, who wrote the *Memoirs* of Mrs. Mortimer and was a member of the Queen Street leaders' meeting and friendly circle, to be the most accomplished and one of the most pious.

On the whole the Queen Street Society would appear to have excelled that of City Road, both in the generosity of their gifts, and especially of their charity to the poor, and in spirituality of mind and general good breeding. This, however, may have been due to the superior class of attendants at Queen Street Chapel, standing west of Ludgate Hill, as compared with the population in the City and in Spitalfields and the East of London, for which City Road was the centre. On the other hand, there are clear indications, in the journal and letters of Mr. Bunting, of the warm-hearted kindness and hospitality of the City Road friends, who were perhaps franker and less reserved than the residents in the West End and Lambeth.

The only journal which Jabez Bunting

ever kept in all his long course of Connexional service is the one to which this chapter owes some few quotations. In later chapters letters between him and some of his correspondents furnish the only first-hand sources of information as to his life and his principles and opinions. Before parting company finally with what he wrote for Miss Maclardie's information as to his surroundings and manner of life, it may be well to gather at first hand some intimations of his inner mind and his more private experiences and motives.

On Wednesday, August 31, 1803, he writes : ' I have preached at Queen Street to a large congregation. . . . I afterwards met the leaders, who are very numerous and respectable in this part of the town. In such a leaders' meeting I have never presided before. They exceed all other Societies I ever knew in the liberal provision they make for their poor.' On Monday evening, September 5, he writes : ' This has been a day of much temptation and depression. O Lord, I am oppressed, undertake for me.' Wednesday, September 7 : ' I believe it will be utterly impracticable to study much here. The only

science we shall have much time to cultivate will be that of finding the way from one street, and chapel, and village, to another. I have hitherto had no leisure at all to think of new texts, or to mend many of my old texts ; I am obliged to preach on those subjects which happen to be at present most familiar to my mind.' September 8 : ' I was so weary and drowsy this morning at five o'clock that, though I heard Mr. Taylor '—his superintendent, with whom he was at the time living—' going out to preach, I had neither curiosity enough nor piety enough to rise and hear him. To-morrow I must be up, as it will be my own turn to conduct the early devotions in the sanctuary. The whole of the forenoon was spent with Mr. Taylor in meeting classes. At four p.m. I went to assist Mr. Benson '—at that time the Connexional editor—' in giving tickets in Little Tower Street ; at six p.m. at the New Chapel Vestry, City Road. At seven, without much time for previous prayer or other preparation, I made my first appearance in the pulpit there. I was not violently shocked, though the congregation was very large, and Messrs. Benson, Rankin, Rodda, Dr. Whitehead, Dr.

Hamilton, and other gentlemen of the same description, composed part of it. My text was 1 Pet. v. 7, which has of late been a favourite subject. This has been one of my best times, as to freedom in public duty, since I arrived in London. I afterwards met the bands. Such is the chronicle of this day's proceedings; how uninteresting to others, yet how important to myself, if considered in connexion with my future account to the Judge of quick and dead!

The record just quoted refers to a Sunday's work. The giving of Society 'tickets,' at a pressing season, such as that which often follows the yearly Conference, when ministers have been absent from their circuit, had to be crowded into the day's work. As the liturgical part of the City Road morning service was always taken by the chaplain known as the Trustees' Chaplain—a clergyman of the Church of England, who also, on pressing occasions, relieved the stationed ministers by preaching the sermon—one of the circuit ministers was occasionally set free to meet classes for tickets in the preaching-rooms in various parts of London.

The congregation was very large on the

Sunday referred to, because the new young minister was to preach his first Sunday evening sermon after his arrival. He had a very good time, and gives the whole tale of the day's work for Miss Maclardie's information, as it was a special and very critical Lord's Day of work. It was no wonder that Jabez Bunting again overslept himself the next morning. He tells his particular friend that he was 'very unfortunate.' He was not called, as he ought to have been, at half-past four, and did not wake till half-past five. He says, 'I never before committed so slothful a blunder, sleeper as I am.' Good Mr. Taylor, who, one might suspect, was a party to the neglect which left him to sleep on, after such a trying day, took the service instead of his young man, and announced that Mr. Bunting would preach the next morning. 'Mr. Lovelace, an old, worn-out barrister, could not help expressing his belief that now there would be a revival in London, for there had been little good done since the morning preaching had been discontinued, and that the abandonment of this practice was the true cause of the present war.' Mr. Taylor must have preached short, for a

prayer-meeting was held afterwards, and there were twenty-one who stayed to the end, 'an extraordinary number.'

Mr. Bunting closes his notes relating to this critical experience of his duty at its hardest by adding, 'Another week is now nearly gone, a week certainly of many mercies, but of much inward exercise and frequent dejection. O Lord, arise, help and deliver me, for Thy name's sake.'

What has now been quoted may serve to indicate, in some measure, the earlier feelings and experience of Mr. Bunting when he entered upon his work in London, and what were some of the special features of the work. 'I find,' he writes, 'that the bed which now stands in my room is that formerly occupied by Mr. Wesley, when he was in London, and in which he finished his triumphant course. This circumstance, small as it is, affords to me, who am a "bigoted Methodist," considerable pleasure.'

If I add a quotation just here, from another letter to Miss Maclardie, it is because it relates, not to London or to his work there, but to Miss Maclardie and their religious relations with each other: 'Your

chief danger,' he says, 'arises from your natural vivacity. This is in itself a great blessing, but it may degenerate into a source of mischief and danger. Give yourself, my dear S., to much prayer. . . . I have reproached myself for speaking in my last too strongly about your preceding letter. I forgot, at the moment, that you were writing to me, and indulged yourself, on that account, in a degree of playfulness which you would not have allowed under other circumstances. . . . I shall be thankful to receive from you any cautions or advices which you may think I need. Watch over me in love, and prove yourself a faithful friend.'

I have referred to the large number of Nonconformists in London at the time when Bunting made his *début* in that great field. The strong leaven of convinced Nonconformists in London—throughout all but the lower working class residentiary quarters, Nonconformists who prized and strictly adhered to their distinctive tenets and set a special value on able and attractive preaching in their sanctuaries—proved an attraction for Mr. Bunting, with whom it was a master-passion to discover and cultivate the friend.

ship of evangelical Nonconformists who were not Dissenting bigots or extreme partisans. There were not a few such for him to hear and know among their pastors, and he would seem to have made the acquaintance of many of them. Mr. Clayton was the preacher he most admired, the eldest of three distinguished brothers, all evangelical Dissenting ministers, and all in due course friends of Dr. Bunting. Occasionally Mr. Jay, of Lady Huntingdon's Chapel, in Bath, visited London, and the young Methodist preacher delighted to hear him. On the first occasion he found him animated and brilliant. When he heard him next he was very instructive and impressive. Mr. Jay on this occasion took his hearer captive, and dissolved him into tenderness and tears, while he was enlarging on the character and sufferings of St. Paul. 'When I hear such preaching as Mr. Jay's,' he says, 'I am always ashamed of myself, and wonder that the people should like to listen to my poor swashy sermons. I feel that I am too declamatory in my mode of preaching. I want more weight and solidity. However, I am roused, and see the need of increasing diligence, and that I, too, by the

blessing of God, may become a "workman that needeth not to be ashamed." ' How completely he was thus 'roused,' and how complete a contrast his characteristic style of preaching soon came to be, for all his after life, to his own description just quoted, is shown luminously by the testimony of contemporary witnesses, beginning shortly after the date of this entry in his journal—witnesses not belonging to his own Church fellowship, and continuous through all his course of pulpit work. He himself, he tells us, 'loved to hear old ministers.' He therefore went to hear Newton of Olney, Cowper's friend, at his church in Lombard Street, but found him 'quite worn out and tottering over the brink of the grave.' He went also to hear Cecil, but describes him as being too sententious for his taste, and too little of an evangelical preacher. After a while he became acquainted with Mr. Burder, and later with all that distinguished family of Dissenting ministers. The Clayton family and the Burder family were through his after life among his choicest friends. He had a passion for hearing the best preachers. A true instinct had made him feel that preach-

ing was the right foundation for the whole sum of the power and influence of a Christian minister, and it is certain that the basis of his commanding influence among his own people was his overmastering power in the pulpit. According to very high, perhaps the very highest, testimony of the evangelical Nonconformists of his own life-time, he had no superior in the pulpit ; the late Dr. Leifchild affirmed this in the most decisive terms.

The journal which he wrote for the reading of Miss Maclardie, up to the day of their marriage, contains affecting references to his secret prayer, its seasons and subjects and its influence on himself, coupled with tender though delicate hints as to the nature and the need of closet prayer and intercession for both himself and his correspondent.

One of Mr. Bunting's later entries in his journal before his marriage is dated on the day before Christmas Day, 1803, which was also a Sunday : ' I have to preach three times to-morrow and read prayers ; twice in my own turn, and once in the New Chapel, at five in the morning, for Mr. Taylor, who is very poorly. All next week my places are to be supplied, that I may be at liberty to

attend to the affairs of the Missions and of the Book Committee.' On the following Wednesday, December 28, almost the last entry in his journal before his marriage, he writes, 'I am quite tired of the cares of business, and should be glad instantly to return to my accustomed duties. I find so bustling a life, spent in such employments, not very favourable to my spiritual interests. Pray for me. I never needed help more.'

His last letter to Miss Maclardie before his marriage was dated from Manchester, on January 17, 1804, at 2 p.m., where it may be presumed that he was staying with his mother. On the Sunday preceding he had preached at Salford in the forenoon, and Oldham Street in the evening, to very crowded congregations, as he says, 'with as much indifference to their censure or applause as I ever felt in my life. I wish I may always be kept as "single of eye and simple of heart."' He told his correspondent, as she had wished to know, that in his opinion his sermons were 'of the middle class, as sermons'; but that he felt as if he had 'more than common liberty and unction in his exhortations and applications.' 'I trust,'

he says, 'that this event will be the commencement of a new era in my religious, as well as in my domestic, life.'

He was married on Tuesday, January 24, at the Prestbury parish church, near Macclesfield. The same evening, according to engagement, he preached at Derby on 1 John i. 9. The next Sunday he took his own proper appointment in London.

London Methodism, as a whole, was full of Christian hospitality. When Mr. Bunting brought his bride to London, and while the friends were making ready for them a suitable dwelling, they were indebted to the hospitality of 'members of the Society' for their temporary home-life, and the kindly warmth and thoughtful attentions of those friends seemed to them to be very refined and generous. 'Our proper home,' writes the bridegroom to his friend Mr. Marsden, 'is at City Road'—the description may be followed to-day by any visitor to the interesting old house—'where, besides the room that regularly belongs to me, we have the use of the large drawing-room on the same floor. We dine with the family, but at other times are alone. . . . But we have spent a month since

our arrival at Mr. Middleton's, and are now paying a similar visit at Mr. Butterworth's'—both of these gentlemen, it may be noted, being Queen Street Methodists, and Mr. Butterworth being the well-known law-bookseller, whose name was to remain over the same shop-window for four generations. 'The hospitality and kindness,' pursues Mr. Bunting, 'of our friends in London are truly great.'

It was not till a short time after his marriage, and therefore after he ceased to journalize, that he became acquainted with the Burders. Doubtless it was the warm-hearted early fraternal intercourse between Dr. Bunting and the most esteemed and influential of the evangelical Dissenters, especially in London, which led, in great part, to his widespread fame and esteem among their brotherhood during his long years of residence in London, and gave him a position of ascendancy in the Evangelical Alliance during all its early course of widespread and beneficent influence.

But the most remarkable fact in relation to his co-operation with distinguished evangelical leaders for a considerable period in London was his connexion with the *Eclectic*

Review, of which, whilst still comparatively a mere youth, he was one of the founders. Some of us are old enough to remember the fame of that notable *Review*, and to have traced some after-effects of its influence in the history of evangelical culture in the earlier half of the last century. A passage in reference to it which occurs in a letter to his mother is worth quoting. It was written on July 2, 1804, when he had been stationed in London ten months. 'This morning I preached at five on "Being sealed with the Spirit." At eight o'clock I went to Mr. Taylor's, Hatton Garden, to attend the Committee for the *Review*, and strange to tell, on the motion of Mr. Burder, was called to the chair ; so I assumed, as well as I could, the air and attitude of a man of consequence, and got through the duties of my office, in my own opinion at least, very respectably. The gentlemen present stared with admiration when I told them that I had preached at five o'clock. Calling at Guildhall, on my way home, I stepped for a while into the Court of King's Bench. . . . I then found a Common Hall of the city assembled to choose two new sheriffs. Several gentlemen

were put in nomination, among whom was our friend, Mr. Marriott.¹ Fortunately for his purse, the majority of votes was in favour of two other persons.'

The *Eclectic Review* when first projected was to have been called the *Bibliothecal Review*. That stupid name was exchanged for the *Eclectic Review*, a title rather less pedantic but hardly more expressive of the object for which it was started. Mr. Butterworth and Mr. Apsley Pellatt, a pushing and rather speculative Nonconformist, seem to have been the two men who did most in the way of starting it. Of the gentlemen invited to the gathering at Mr. Taylor's, two were Wesleyan ministers—Mr. Bunting and the Rev. Thomas Roberts, a cultivated and popular Wesleyan minister, a Cornishman, but employed chiefly by Mr. Wesley in Ireland, where he became intimate with Mr. Knox, of Londonderry, Wesley's beloved friend, and with the Guinness family, with which he intermarried. His later years he spent either in London or, finally, between

¹ Mr. Marriott was the one Methodist City man, a friend of John Wesley and a man of considerable wealth.

Bath and Bristol. He had a wide circle of friends, his polished address and his catholic spirit combining to make him popular.

The *Eclectic Review* was intended to represent, in a generous spirit, all cultivated and thoughtful evangelical Christians. Of the gentlemen invited to the inaugural meeting Mr. Bunting attended, only one, however, Joseph Pratt, was an Episcopalian ; eight of the twenty-nine laymen were members of the Methodist Society ; Mr. Greatheed, the friend of Cowper, was the responsible and official Chairman of the committee. The first trustees were Mr. Burder, the Rev. George Collison of Hackney, William Alers, Apsley Pellatt, and Jabez Bunting. It was a notable thing that at the first and constitutive meeting, already referred to, Mr. Greatheed not being present, the youngest member of the association, Jabez Bunting, should have immediately, by common consent, been called to the chair of the meeting. When he was thus placed in the chair of the *Eclectic Review* representatives he was only twenty-five years of age. One cannot but be reminded of the fact that half a century later, when the Evangelical Alliance was

called to counsel, if Dr. Bunting was present he was, as a matter of course, looked to as the guide and moderator, if not the officially constituted chairman, of the representative business assembly.

The one grievance that he complained of was that he was called upon continually, as if he had been a handy young man for every department, instead of pursuing his private studies, to act as a sort of 'prentice hand for whatever work his departmental seniors required to have done. He was required at every turn to act as assistant in any and every departmental service, and especially as helper to Mr. Benson, the Editor, and to the Book Steward and the Missionary department. This last-named department in particular, in consequence of Dr. Coke's frequent absences from England—he being nominated Secretary of the Conference, and yet being also absolute autocrat of all Missionary work, whether in England, Scotland, Wales, Ireland, or America and the West Indies—was in complete confusion and seemingly in an all but bankrupt condition. To help in this apparently hopeless tangle was the final burden which fell on to the

shoulders of Jabez Bunting, so that his standing and incessant complaint was that he, who, as an inexperienced youth, ought to give his time and strength to assiduous self-improvement, as other young men, not stationed in London, made it their business to do, was so drawn upon by departmental demands that he had little or no time left for study and for private prayer. Mr. Benson, having known 'Jabez' from his boyhood as his very near neighbour and his parents' pastor and friend, made free with the young man, and put him to heavy tasks without any sense of injustice; while, as respected the Book-Room accounts, which were in seemingly hopeless confusion, and Dr. Coke's Missionary entanglements at home and abroad, the London ministers generally felt that a perilous responsibility rested upon them. They accordingly agreed in requesting that Mr. Bunting might for a while be relieved from other work, that he might give his whole time to the investigation of Missionary and Book-Room affairs. This was at the end of his first year in London; while, many weeks before, Mr. Benson had laid upon his young friend the burden of

transcribing, for the Methodist Magazine, one hundred large and closely printed pages of Dr. Magee's great work on Atonement and Sacrifice, a copy of which, as we have seen, Jabez had been able to obtain through the private influence of Dr. Percival with his brother-in-law, Dr. Magee.

From the letter of Dr. Percival to his friend, whom he addresses as 'My dear sir,' relating to this subject, what I am about to quote is, in various respects, suggestive :

'The work of Dr. Magee,' writes Dr. Percival, 'shall be delivered to your sister, to be forwarded to you for the use of your friend. I am in daily expectation of a visit from Dr. Magee, and shall state to him the particulars you mention. I believe his work is out of print in Dublin, as well as in London. He is at present so much occupied with his *Discourses on the Prophecies* as not to have leisure for a new edition of his treatise on Atonement. I thank you for your kind attention to my commission respecting *Eden on Punishment*. My whole family sincerely unite, in the kindest regards to you, with your sincerely affectionate friend and servant,

'THOMAS PERCIVAL.'

In a letter from Dr. Percival to Mr. Bunting's sister, written at a somewhat later date, he says :

‘ Be so good as to offer my most affectionate respects to your brother, with my best thanks for his very acceptable and obliging present. The third edition of the *Penal Law* is the last, and that which I wanted. Lord Auckland informs me that his bookseller could nowhere meet with a copy. Your brother, therefore, has been fortunate in his search.

‘ Yours,

‘ T. P.’

Such were the terms in which Dr. Percival corresponded, not only with Jabez Bunting, but with his sister. The Buntings were poor, yet not unworthy of the warm friendship of such distinguished persons as Dr. Percival and his family.

In describing the conditions of his life in London in the foregoing pages, I have anticipated in part what refers to a date subsequent to his marriage, but still belonging to the second year of his residence in London, and necessary to give an

intelligible idea of the conditions under which, in the year 1804, the joint life in London, religiously and also socially regarded, of the married pair was to be passed, in view of grave opening responsibilities and of rapidly unfolding opportunities. It was not till his vocation was completed by marriage that all that was involved in it began distinctly to unfold before him, and his sphere of responsibility, as shared with a religiously minded partner, came into view as an expanding prospect. The meaning and capacity of his life were now beginning to come roundly into perspective—in breadth, and depth, and height; till now it had been fragmentary. He had been ordained; that was much, very much, but not all that was essential to prepare him for the work of a primitive, a practical, presbyter or bishop, with the full cure of souls, in an evangelical and apostolic Church.

CHAPTER IV

A METHODIST LEADER

MR. BUNTING'S rule at this period of his itinerancy was fixed and immovable not to remain in any circuit more than two years. At the end of his residence in London he took rank immediately, notwithstanding his youth, as one of the leading men in the Conference. His unanimous appointment as Assistant Secretary of the Conference did in effect give him that position. Dr. Coke having been, next to Wesley himself, the minister taking precedence of all the Methodist preachers, and holding in America the office of Superintendent, whilst elsewhere the whole missionary field of Methodism was under his sole and supreme direction, was, as a matter of course, instated in the office of Secretary of the Conference after Wesley's death. He was, however, elected President in 1797, and a second time in 1805 ; but, after

that, his multifarious responsibilities, and his necessary journeys as Missionary director in all parts of the Methodist mission-field, made it impossible for him to perform the actual work belonging to the secretaryship, although out of a fine courtesy the Conference year after year yielded him the titular dignity of Secretary of the Conference. Indeed, for several years, though nominal Secretary, he did not even join his signature as Secretary with that of the President in the authentication of the *Minutes* of the Conference. All semblance of reality, however, having thus been lost, and the *Minutes* having no secretarial signature to sanction them year after year, the Conference determined to resolve the official difficulty by appointing an Assistant Secretary, who should do the actual secretarial work, but whose name should not appear under the President's as Secretary of the Conference. Except, however, for the purpose of the general and final signature as Secretary, he was, during the sittings of the Conference, the Secretary *de facto*.

The actual hitch in the Conference itself which led to Mr. Bunting's appointment as Assistant Secretary is described by Mr.

Bunting in a letter to his mother, written from Leeds, where the Conference was held in the year 1806. Dr. Coke at length very nearly failed of election as Secretary. The Conference, it was evident, felt that it was time to put an end to an unreality. Dr. Clarke was chosen President by a fair, though divided, vote—chosen against his own protest, and ‘literally dragged into the office.’ Dr. Coke was elected Secretary, by a small majority, Mr. Benson being very near him in the voting. ‘It was proposed,’ says Mr. Bunting in his letter to his mother, ‘to elect an Assistant Secretary; and, after an ineffectual struggle on my part, I was compelled to take my seat in that character.’ He complains that this will be a heavy tax on him, and will oblige him to stay all through the Conference, to the very end. ‘On the other hand,’ he adds, ‘I secure by it the advantages of occupying a capital station in the Conference, close to the President’s chair, where I see and hear everything; and of gaining considerable information on our affairs.’

Here, indeed, was a seat near the throne, and a duty of perpetual consultation with

the President, which, for such a man as Mr. Bunting, meant in reality a seat of ascendancy, giving him complete and official knowledge and a right of advice or suggestion to the President and the Conference official staff. He was the man whom every one who wanted any new thing of importance done found it necessary to see and more or less consult. And he was a man of transcendent ability and great insight. Dr. Coke's preoccupation was Mr. Bunting's opportunity for taking a legitimate and effective part in the guidance of Conference business. But, of course, if he had himself proved a failure, and unequal to the opportunity, his failure would have been exemplary and decisive.

His two years in London, and the special work which had been imposed upon him there, had given him such an insight into the actual condition of things in the Connexion as no other young man had or could have gained, and he was already on terms of cordial friendship with the leading ministers and many of the leading laymen of the Connexion. His training under Dr. Percival had been, in fact, a training in the principles and equities of public business. His experi-

ence of confusion and embarrassment in the affairs of the Book-Room and of the Mission-field had taught him the necessity of applying to the Connexional affairs of Methodism the principles and business methods which ruled in the management of great secular undertakings. He saw how far and wide, as Methodism developed into a great Church, this demand for the application of business principles to Connexional developments of Church work and agency must growingly extend. He felt that, side by side with ecclesiastical responsibilities and far-spreading Church work, lay agency would have to be organized and carried into effect. Already the master-principle of his life's policy was taking shape in his mind. The travelling preachers must be fully recognized and organized as an ordained brotherhood of ministers. Side by side with them must be organized an army of lay helpers, with needful official functions and responsibilities, furnishing at the same time the intelligence and experience necessary for their lay help and partnership alongside of the pastors. This double advance could not fail to lead to a theological training and ministerial ordination on the one hand, and

to a system of mixed committees and joint councils for the co-operation of the itinerant ministers and their lay helpers on the other.

CHAPTER V

LINE OF DEVELOPMENT

I SAID some pages back that Mr. Bunting's opportunity for taking an effective lead in the conduct of the affairs of the Wesleyan Methodist Church had been created by his appointment as Assistant Secretary of the Conference to supply the necessary lack of service of Dr. Coke, owing to his Missionary calls and engagements; but that what remained to be proved was that Mr. Bunting was equal to the great opportunity and difficult position which had devolved upon him. During the years which followed, his competency was tested and very fully established. Accordingly, when Dr. Coke's grievous but glorious death took place at sea, on his voyage to India, and it had become an absolute necessity that his place as Secretary must be definitely supplied, there was no

serious controversy or hesitation as to his successor. There was, in fact, no other to be thought of but the very able and diligent Assistant Secretary who for years past had borne with consummate competency and success the burden of Secretarial duty. Jabez Bunting, still a young man, was nevertheless by common consent invested with the most important office, next to the Presidency, which could be conferred on any minister—an office, indeed, practically and in the influence it carried, the most responsible and important which the Methodist Conference had to bestow.

He brought into the position much more than the weight which any nomination under other circumstances could have conferred. His experience, his past services, his Connexional prestige, the result of his services, concurred in giving him a moral influence, so to speak, which no other minister, however able or faithful or brilliant, could possibly possess. The whole Conference knew that a few more years of Connexional service must bring him to the President's seat of distinction and public authority. But when he was chosen Assistant Secretary his service had

been brief ; he was still a very young man, and he could not with dignity and general satisfaction have succeeded to the Presidential seat till years of responsible service had been added, which would enable him to guide and advise, as being no longer in early youth. The weight of mature age would have been added to his consummate ability and his recognized high services to his Church. He was chosen Assistant Secretary in 1805, Secretary in 1814, President in 1820.

Meantime, it will be interesting and appropriate to view him as he worked and fraternized in some of the most interesting and important of the Methodist circuits during the ripening period of Methodist development between his early ministry in London and his first Presidency in 1820. This was his season for coming into close personal relations with the most worthy and influential of his brethren, and some of the most important of the country circuits, especially, of the Connexion. Dr. Bunting, till age and pre-occupations came, which limited his powers and opportunities, was a particularly social and brotherly minister, whilst as a circuit

minister he was, without doubt, the most powerful preacher and gospel evangelist that the ranks of the Wesleyan brotherhood have produced.

On leaving London in 1805, Mr. Bunting was appointed to his native town, in accordance with the urgent request of the Manchester Methodists, though not in all respects according to his own preference. It was, however, a very successful appointment, and laid the foundation of personal influence as a preacher, especially when appointed, at a later period, a second time to Manchester, such as perhaps no other Methodist minister has exercised in any circuit. Here his eldest son, the devout and accomplished William Maclardie Bunting, was born. There was a tradition, as his second son has set down in his father's memoir, that he was absent from home when this event took place. On his return, and when he received the news, 'he fell on his knees and poured forth one of those pleading prayers for which, through life, he was so remarkable ; imploring, in particular, that, if God should so will, the child might become a Methodist preacher. Then came a rush of paternal pride and joy so great that,

as a friend had to remind him, he forgot to seal the letter which took the good news to Macclesfield.' It need hardly be added that the first wish of his fatherly heart was not denied him.

It was in this his first appointment to Manchester that he was able to organize what for years afterwards he carried out in all his circuits, the periodical gathering for Christian ends—social ends and opportunities, in which his brotherly heart and social spirit greatly delighted, consultative opportunities and general conversations mutually helpful for the religious life, all this in a truly Methodist spirit of brotherhood and fellowship—of as many brethren from the District as could conveniently come together. These meetings were not seldom fertile in prudent suggestions for helping forward the work of the Church, and always contributed to promote mutual good understanding and brotherly concert and union among the ministers. They greatly increased his legitimate influence among his brethren, prevented seeds of jealousy from springing up, and promoted Connexional unity. If, in later years, his overwhelming official cares and duties,

coupled with the increasing though necessary seclusion in his study which constant pre-occupation and growing infirmities had made imperative for him, had not rendered such large social opportunities impossible, they might have contributed powerfully to promote unity and mutual confidence in the Methodist Church. It was not any spirit of official reserve, nor, like Achilles, discontent or pride, that made our great man keep his tent. Those who *could* meet with him in privacy found his brotherliness instinctive, and his friendliness spontaneous and natural; and, if of a generous spirit, such men never lost the sense of his quiet, pleasant, unostentatious brotherliness, or fatherliness, as the case might be.

A homely story is told by Mr. Percival Bunting as to the relations of Mrs. Bunting and Mrs. Newton in their private intercourse when both the husbands were resident as colleagues in the always friendly and hospitable Methodist stronghold of Sheffield. Both these ladies, it will be remembered, though married to Methodist ministers, were not specially educated with a view to their social responsibilities as these developed in the

domestic conditions of after life. What I am about to quote will be an extract from a very long and interesting letter to Mr. Percival Bunting from Mrs. Newton, in which her first introduction to Mrs. Bunting, and a circumstance connected with it, are related, as well as a touching story referring to a later and very pathetic incident. Those who read what I shall quote should know that the house where the ladies met was that of a wealthy Methodist, almost a sort of Methodist grandee, resident near Sheffield.

‘Shall I tell you,’ says the wife of Dr. Newton to the wife of Dr. Bunting¹—neither minister being at the time a D.D., but each a godly and gifted Methodist minister married to a socially superior lady—‘shall I tell you of our first introduction, so perfectly characteristic of your dear mother? Mr. Bunting had his foot on a chair; and she was stitching a loop that had failed in his black silk stocking on his then remarkably finely formed leg—much admired in those days when trousers

¹ In 1834 Mr. Bunting received an intimation, couched in terms of very warm and appreciative respect and affection, that the Wesleyan University of Connecticut had conferred upon him the degree of Doctor of Divinity.

were only worn by seamen. The footman announced my name ; and Mrs. B—— desisted from her work for a few moments, and we shook hands. Then, with one of the looks peculiar to her, half droll, half serious, she said to me, “ Do you mend your husband’s stockings ? ” Of course I answered in the affirmative. “ Oh, well, then,” she replied, “ I will finish my job,” and in a few minutes Mr. Bunting and she were conversing with me, rather as old friends, than as those so newly introduced to my acquaintance. Such was our first meeting. They removed as soon as possible to Carver Street, in which street we also resided. The youngest child was taken ill ; and, a few days after, your father came to me, and requested me to go to Mrs. Bunting. I joined them immediately, and found your mother with the babe on her knee, evidently in the latest struggle. I thought of my own one child, and joined my tears with theirs. A few hours, and their first girl was gone : and, until after her funeral, I spent the morning and afternoon of every day with the sorrowing parents, and, at dusk, they returned with me to tea.’

One cannot read this without entering into

their close and tender fellowship. A 'touch of nature makes the whole world kin.'

A later passage in this beautiful letter is worth quoting. All who have known Sheffield will remember how hospitable, no doubt sometimes to a fault, that frank and free-hearted city is, and certainly not least among the Methodist people. 'The Society in Sheffield,' writes Mrs. Newton, 'was very, very hospitable; and invitations to dinner, tea, and supper were so general that we agreed to decline all visits on the Sabbath, and engaged to spend the evenings of that day alternately at each other's houses. Our dear husbands enjoyed the relaxation of cheerful converse and of mutual Christian feelings; and the social meal, after their Sabbath toils, —for they had usually had long walks or rides, preached three times, and attended to their other duties as Methodist ministers.'

As to Dr. Bunting's supreme power as a preacher under divine influence, I shall write nothing in this connexion. A quotation from Mr. Arthur on a later page will more aptly and powerfully deal with this aspect of his work and his gifts than I could hope to do.

Much might be set down of interest and

importance as to his strict and godly Sunday-school views, and as to the political animosity kindled by his faithful admonitions at the terrible time of the Luddite riots. He was a faithful pastor and preacher both on the right hand and on the left, and was in peril because of his fidelity in rebuking rioters and their terribly violent misdeeds, and also because he preached justice and sympathy in those desperate times, on behalf of violent and ignorant men. But in the terrible years for England which immediately followed the peace gained by the downfall of Napoleon, all classes suffered severely; while political rancour, on both sides, made the path of the honest and godly man hard and narrow. Jabez Bunting passed through those troublous times, not without incurring reproach—and sometimes indeed serious perils from disaffected malignity—but on the whole with steadily increasing honour and influence. He was at this time honoured and esteemed by the most honourable and estimable men of the country. In that very year (1820) he was by a very large majority elected President of the Methodist Conference, being the youngest man who had occupied that

Chair. He had, it may justly be said, founded the Missionary Society and the organic discipline of his own Church.

It is a remarkable thing that the first clear statement of the line of development for Methodism which Mr. Bunting had so early conceived in his own mind, and on which he worked for forty years, was contained in the *Christian Times*, a journal of broadly evangelical principles, but in no official way nor by any proprietary influence connected with Methodism, in the latter part of the year 1849. The Rev. George Stringer Rowe, in the admirable supplement to Dr. Bunting's biography, by which he completed the unfortunately imperfect work of Mr. Percival Bunting, has inserted an extract from the article in the *Christian Times* to which I refer, and which I read with knowledge of the author when it first appeared, although the secret of its authorship was not disclosed till long afterwards. The writer was my late intimate friend, William Arthur. I read the article when I was visiting him at his lodgings in London in 1849. There were sufficient reasons then and for some time afterwards for the main-

tenance of the anonymous character of the article. The insight, however, which it showed into the mind and policy of Dr. Bunting was remarkable. It threw a flood of light on his character, his policy, and his whole life. My own belief is that, before Mr. Arthur consented to write this masterly vindication of Dr. Bunting's character for the *Christian Times*, he had had a confidential interview with Dr. Bunting, had told him what he was asked to do, and invited his confidence as to his principles, plans, and policy throughout his whole course; and that then, fully informed and armed, he consented to write, and did write the most influential and complete vindication of Dr. Bunting's character that ever appeared in that disturbed time. This is perfectly compatible with the signally frank and independent, as well as most respectful, manner in which Mr. Arthur always demeaned himself towards Dr. Bunting in Conference or at important committees, where from time to time he frankly differed from his revered friend. It is also consistent with the pathetic final farewell between the great ancient and the noble

young man, to which I shall presently refer.

‘ In working the new Missionary Society, Dr. Bunting proposed ’—he, let me interject, was the first to propose, and stood alone at first in proposing—‘ to have laymen joined with the ministers. This many of his most influential seniors opposed ; but he prevailed. Thus, successful in one liberal measure, he proceeded in the same direction, till upon every Connexional committee laymen were placed in equal number with ministers. He also proposed and carried the admission of laymen into the District Meetings. So that, through his legislation, no matter of Connexional finance is settled by the Conference, all this being done by mixed committees, and the Conference acting as a court of record for their measures. . . . He has never cared to be *with* the people ; but, if his measures speak, he is careful to be, according to his judgement, *for* them. . . .

‘ Another feature of Dr. Bunting’s legislation has been the giving to Methodism all the ordinances of a Church complete in itself, so removing it from the position of a supplement to the Establishment. The opening of

colleges for the training of the ministry, the use of imposition of hands in ordination, and the placing of the various Connexional funds on permanent bases, all directly tended to give Methodism a position wholly independent.'

Mr. Arthur in these two paragraphs has defined the policy of Dr. Bunting, steadfastly maintained through all his course, in the development of the ecclesiastical order and organization of his own Church; and since his death the course of onward movement has still been maintained on the same lines of constitutional development. What, however, to enlightened and loyal-hearted Methodists is vindication, was to some who desired to rank as Methodists a ground of dissatisfaction and condemnation. The prejudices of levelling Methodists were shrewdly on the scent when they fastened upon Dr. Bunting and his counsels and personal influence as the main forces which were building up our ecclesiastically ordered Methodist Church, a community in which the New Testament distinction between the pastorate and the flock, in regard to spiritual vocation and responsibility, is a fundamental principle.

He was doing his part in the creation of a presbyterian Church, organized on the primitive and Pauline model, with a body of elders, or bishops, and of deacon helpers, as prescribed by St. Paul, and thus occupying a defined and impregnable position. At the bottom, many of the malcontents objected to any order of separated ministers, whether known as bishop, presbyter, elder, or deacon. One secession after another rested on this basis of discontent. And yet, as professed Methodists, their fundamental difficulty was to reconcile their levelling ideas with those so very plainly and so often inculcated by John Wesley, of whom they professed to be followers. From time to time, when it seemed to him needful, Wesley vindicated for his Society the essential character of a Christian Church—an apostolic Church with presbyter-bishops, and tried and approved deacons. It was part of Dr. Bunting's work, by defining and organizing a diaconate, and giving the diaconal body due powers and rights, to give at the same time a separate distinctness to the Pauline order of bishops and presbyters, of superintendents and ministerial helpers. The superintendents were the 'assistants' of

Wesley as the chief bishop of the Methodist Church. In certain districts of Methodism, by a confusion very natural, so long as Wesley lived, the distinction between a travelling itinerant assistant or helper, and a local unpaid evangelist, was not understood ; though the mere fact that the one had given up his trade or profession, and had only the free-will offerings of members or hearers to trust to, while the other lived by his business or handicraft, and preached or otherwise, according to his own free will and consent, on the Lord's Day, might have sufficed to prove that his ministrations were not a vocation but a free-will service rendered.

In and around Manchester, as is shown in Dr. Bunting's biography, there was a troublesome element of irregularity and turbulence among so-called Methodists, connected with prejudices and practices opposed to Church order and ministerial authority, which came to the surface in the years following upon the death of Wesley. Bunting had had experience of this state of things, and it was his object to have such a body of trained and competent Christian ministers, and such a discipline established among ministers and people, that

in process of time this leaven might work itself out without any violent agitation. But for the intermixture, in following years, with the remains of the spirit of ecclesiastical insubordination, of intense and violent political influences, arising at successive crises of public affairs, and of evil jealousy on the part of some ministers of the body, Mr. Bunting's wise policy would have been not only a complete but a peaceful success. It is, at any rate, to this policy that Methodism owes its position as a Church at this day.

The character and the force of the feeling to which I have referred has its illustration in the fact that it was not till many years after Wesley's death, and twelve or fifteen after Bunting had entered the Methodist ministry, that the title of *Reverend*—a much less fitting title than that of *Pastor*, but one which had years before come into general use as an equivalent to such a designation—came to be generally applied to Wesleyan ministers; and it can hardly be said to have been Connexionally accepted and officially legalized till still later, though it had long been in use as the designation of ordained Nonconformist pastors.

The deep and bitter prejudice against organs in Methodist chapels, which led to the 'Protestant Methodist' secession in Leeds in 1828, was part of the same general feeling of which we have been speaking, and which was both strong and bitter in the West Riding, partly through the preaching and teaching of Wesley's early friend Ingham—a feeling strongly savouring of low Commonwealth Independency, resembling the views of the Plymouth Brethren, and which, but for the influence of good John Nelson in Yorkshire, would have done more harm to Methodism than was done. Striking traces are disclosed in Dr. Bunting's biography of the wide prevalence of such ideas in the West Riding, in one form in Huddersfield, in another near Halifax, and, in respect to the organ question especially, in Leeds. An organ meant a solemn, perhaps a stately public service, conducted by an educated order of ministers. Such was the suspicion, the unformulated inference, of the 'Free Church' Methodists of eighty years ago; whereas the band of stringed instruments, together with a numerous choir, was consistent with a free-and-easy service in which promiscuous influences might dominate.

Just so, also, it was in regard to the question of an educated and trained ministry, which came to its crisis a few years later than the organ controversy, in 1834-5, in connexion with the foundation by the Conference of a Theological Institution. This question brought to a focus the anti-ministerial feeling existing in different parts of the Connexion. Ministerial jealousy of Dr. Bunting united in this case with anti-ministerial prejudices. A senior minister who had long been a strong advocate of ministerial training, and of a Theological Institution, and who had himself obtained a Scotch degree of D.D., when he found that he was not likely to be placed at the head of the Institution, turned about, opposed the project, and put himself at the head of an agitation against it. The result was a great Chancery suit, for he had made Oldham Street Chapel, being then stationed there, the centre and chief office of his agitation against the proposed college. The Chancery suit on his part was a terrible failure, though for Methodism evil was turned to good. There were two trials in Chancery, one before the Vice-Chancellor (Shadwell), the second before the Lord Chan-

cellor (Lyndhurst). The total result was the recognition by the High Court of Chancery of Mr. Wesley's Deed of Declaration and of the *Minutes* of Conference as legal authorities binding on Wesleyan ministers and trustees.

Bitterness, unhappily, had been mixed with this agitation by the introduction into the ecclesiastical controversy of political democratic ideas. After 1828, when the Leeds organ controversy had resulted in the formation of the soon-extinguished 'Protestant Methodist' secession, the current of political affairs hurried swiftly on to the rapids of which the Reform Act marked the centre and the point of maximum movement. A large middle-class Church such as Wesleyan Methodism had become, could not but feel in great force the sweep of that movement, which had by no means exhausted its momentum in 1834, when the agitation arose on the subject of the Theological Institution.

Dr. Bunting, from the beginning of his ministerial course, had felt the need for himself, and had earnestly desired the provision for all candidates for the ministry, of an appropriate training, though he never desired to be himself charged with the task of organ-

izing and taking the management of a training college. But as to all these points of organization he had the satisfaction of seeing immovably established the principles of Wesleyan Methodism, as legitimately derived from those on which John Wesley was led to found the Methodist Society, which has developed into the Wesleyan Methodist Church, the ecclesiastical principles as well as the legally defined and scripturally derived doctrines of which are now represented on all the continents and all the most attractive and influential island sovereignties of this redeemed world.

The one man who had guided and helped most powerfully in the final organization of Wesleyan Methodism as an Œcumenical Church, so that it stands clear and high on the sure foundations of Christian truth and teaching—the one man who, beyond all other of the great and good Methodist leaders since the death of Wesley himself, had shown how most surely to guard and preserve the vital truths and principles of life and working which alone can animate and inspire a world-wide Christian Church in its aims and efforts—was the Manchester Methodist, Jabez Bunting.

CHAPTER VI

CHARACTER AND INFLUENCE

THERE are some facts illustrative of the spirit and character of Jabez Bunting which should not be wanting in this sketch. What are spoken of as anecdotes, so that they be true, are examples of traits of character—instances of what a man is, from which, sometimes, more may be learnt than from any elaborate description of character. I have glanced at the mutual relations of Dr. Bunting and Mr. Arthur. Mr. Arthur, though a perfectly courteous gentleman, was in society the most absolutely fearless of men, though never forward or intrusive. Social rank or title or great wealth or display never seemed to affect his bearing towards those he met. The position, the rank, the power or authority, of any one with whom he was brought into contact, never caused

him the slightest touch of nervousness. 'A man's a man for a' that' might have been his motto, though nobody ever could or would have charged him with anything like insolence or want of courtesy to any man. This trait in his character gives point and value to the incident that is now to be related; it illuminates the character both of Dr. Bunting and William Arthur. The story is told by Dr. Gregory—the late gifted editor of the *Wesleyan Methodist Magazine*—the best of story-tellers because the most exact and vivid. He says:

'We never saw a masculine face and commanding eyes bend on any man a look so full of affectionate admiration as Dr. Bunting fixed on William Arthur in replying to a speech of his, made in the London District Meeting in 1846. Mr. Arthur, then in the eighth year of his ministry, happened to be near Dr. Bunting, when he rose and animadverted very strongly on something which had taken place in the City Road Circuit. Before the doctor had time to sit down, Mr. Arthur started up and, with some warmth, defended the action of the parties reflected on. Dr. Bunting remained standing

all the time, intently listening. So soon as the young speaker had concluded, the grand old general laid his hand gently on the young man's shoulder and reminded him of some facts he had lost sight of which changed the whole complexion of the affair, resting on his face his large, full eyes, with a gaze of such intense and subduing tenderness as "Paul the aged" might have bent on Timothy. The scene rose vividly before us on reading William Bunting's account of the death-bed parting between the two: "Mr. Arthur prayed with him, and then, for the second time, received from his truly apostolic lips the kiss of benediction and love." It seemed to me a very beautiful and solemn action, as between those two men, as if it were the seal of a transferred commission from the elder to the younger of them to care specially for Methodism in India.'

Dr. Bunting's accomplished and charming eldest son—the Rev. William Maclardie Bunting—whom truly to know was to admire and love, thus links together in love and mutual confidence Dr. Bunting and his beloved 'son' in the English Methodist

ministry. In his valuable and interesting *History of Methodism in Ireland*, the Rev. C. H. Crookshank thus describes the circumstance which has lent colour and emphasis to my reference in this place to the special relations between Dr. Bunting and Mr. Arthur. Dr. Bunting, as President of the English Conference in 1837, also, according to rule, presided over the Irish Conference at its meeting held in Cork in July. William Arthur, already famed throughout Irish Methodism as a brilliant youth, known also as belonging to a family of old and high lineage, though of reduced circumstances, was present at the Conference, and was recommended for training in the Theological Institution, of which, at length, an instalment was established. Dr. Bunting had taken knowledge of the youth, still in his teens, and coveted him for the East Indian Mission of Methodism. 'I wish,' he said to the Irish brethren in their Conference, 'you would give us that young man for India.' 'Then,' replied good and noble Mr. Waugh (ten years later a dear friend of my own), 'we make you a present of him for India.' Thus Mr. Arthur was transferred to English

Methodism, and brought into special personal relations with Dr. Bunting.

It may be well accordingly to bring to a close this record of Dr. Bunting's course as the greatest man of middle Methodism by quoting some passages from an article of Mr. Arthur's in the *London Quarterly Review*. It is founded on the first edition of Mr. Percival Bunting's unfinished biography of his father. This article is incomparably the best estimate of Mr. Arthur's early 'patron'—let that word be forgiven, and let us say—of the wise man who obtained possession of the brilliant Irish boy for our English mission in India, and saw him rise into greatness in the English Conference at an earlier age than any one but himself. It has never been republished since it appeared in the *Review*, and, indeed, has remained in a sense anonymous. But its authorship could not be doubtful to any one who knew Mr. Arthur's hand as a writer—or his history during the twenty years which had elapsed since the young lad met Dr. Bunting, in the Irish Conference at Cork in 1837. It is now, perhaps, too late to publish that article separately, and there is no proposal to issue

collectively Mr. Arthur's choicest books and published essays. A favour, therefore, will be conferred on our readers and the Methodist public if some portions of the article are transferred to these pages. They will serve at least to make this small book less unworthy of its great subject than otherwise it would be.

'It has been justly said,' wrote Mr. Arthur, 'that few in modern days have better exemplified that union of reason, simplicity, and vehemence which, according to the just criticism of Sir James Mackintosh, formed the prince of ancient orators. It is not possible to describe Dr. Bunting's eloquence more exactly than "as a union of reason, simplicity, and vehemence." The reason was not too deep to mar the simplicity, and the simplicity was of that kind which comes alone of masterly power. The vehemence was not constant, but occasional. Vivacity and manly force pervaded every part of his discourses; but it was now and then, in debate, and in peculiar passages of sermons, especially in the peroration, that a triple energy breathed and swelled through the tones, till his great frame seemed heaving with internal fires, and the

swiftly-rolling stream of heated language poured out was irresistible. He did not keep up a perpetual blaze like Chalmers—who, let it here be interjected, read his discourses—or mark his discourse by periodical climaxes, according to the oratorical joinery of some celebrities. His enunciation was as clear, and his tones as felicitous, as those of Dr. M'Neile; his discussion as luminous, but never so heavy, as that of Mr. Noel; his points as clearly seen as those of Dr. Candlish, and more compactly, less technically, stated; his wit and satire finer, and perhaps not less sharp, than Dr. Cooke's, of Belfast; his thunderbolts as hot, and far better forged, than those of Dr. Duff. Some of these had qualities to which he had no pretension; but in the masterly presence, and in the sage sway of a consulting assembly, we should compare none of them with him.

‘His oratorical voice was clear, ringing, not sonorous, yet full, very flexible, with occasionally a high, but never a very low note. It struck the hearer, not as Dr. Newton's did, as a grand musical instrument, but simply as a first rate organ of speech. Grandeur of matter he seldom reached, and of tone he

never affected. He had a sovereign contempt for second-hand sublimity, but a real heart for the true. In his most powerful passages, though his voice was oratorical in the highest degree, it was an oratory so suited to the strict and practical character of his object that a grandiose tone was rarely heard. But if, in one of those terrible moments of sarcasm with which he often ruffled a debate, he chose to put on the round mouth and grand air for a moment, the acting was incomparable ; and, beside his own masculine, simple eloquence, this superbness looked like a drummer's jacket beside a warrior's cloak.'

As to 'the state of heart in which, as a preacher, Dr. Bunting appeared before his audience,' Mr. Arthur in the same review writes as follows : 'He was not there to make them speak rapturously of his talents, but to deliver a message. It was in this aspect of his ministry that Dr. Bunting passed beyond the criticism which follows a mere speaker, and put on a robe which hid all graces and defects. . . . None ever heard the preaching of Dr. Bunting, ere "his natural force abated," without recognizing in his appeals a force which addressed neither

imagination nor intellect ; but, only using these as the ear and the eye of the invisible conscience, went direct into that, and dealt with it as by authority straight from heaven. . . . He was himself no perfunctory lecturer, who had to discuss a point and leave it ; he was a messenger with business to do, an ambassador with a point to carry. . . . There are happy believers now close in upon the celestial shore, who look back upon a long and changeful voyage across life's troubled sea, and remember, as the moment of their soul's crisis, a time when his voice seemed as if it had made all around them devouring waves ; and then he turned their eye to One who said, *Peace, be still !* and there was a great calm ; and in the better country there is no small company of thrice-blessed spirits, whose course of sin ended, whose life of faith began, through the amazing ministry of Jabez Bunting.'

What has now been quoted admirably expresses the secret of Dr. Bunting's spiritual power as a preacher. In relation especially to his paramount sway in the business assemblies of his brethren, which, in conjunction with his unique force over the conscience of

his hearers, made him the ruler of assemblies among his brother ministers as no other man ever was, Mr. Arthur sums up in one paragraph all that combined to make him the potentate that he was throughout his full-orbed course : ‘ The deep piety, strong intellect, great application, business tact, and predilection for legislation and administration ; the ability to defend, the boldness to attack, the determination in maintaining what commended itself, the readiness to innovate where he believed he could improve—formed the basis of his power. His unparalleled power was a simple necessity of his greatness.’ If his friends may admit, as Mr. Arthur seems to intimate, that ‘ the dissensions which arose in the years of his ascendancy were not unaffected by some faults in his character ’—the faults of a keen, quick spirit, intensely in earnest as to every important point in the Church life—his honest and candid opponents, as to some points more or less questionable, should, to quote once more Mr. Arthur’s words, ‘ admit that never were faults more on the surface, more entirely open to the public eye, and never power so extraordinary exercised with

greater disinterestedness, or fewer causes for reproach.'

IN his earlier years Mr. Bunting's influence was rapidly extended and his warm friends multiplied by the circles of fellowship between ministers in neighbouring circuits which he organized in circuit after circuit as long as he was able to keep up his itinerancy. Nor was it of his seeking that he at length ceased to itinerate. Location was never sought; it was always disliked, and as far as possible shunned and avoided, by him. But Connexional necessities in the end were too strong for him, and, in spite of his repugnance, the last quarter of a century of his life was passed in the imprisonment of official seclusion in London. Hence his circle of frank fellowship became more and more restricted, to his own sorrow and to the loss of the whole Church to which he belonged. Had his social conditions been freer and larger, and his intimacies with provincial Methodists, ministers especially, been as numerous proportionally as in his youth, his nobleness of character and the generosity of his spirit would have been matter of common experience, and misrepresentations would not have been able to

maintain their hold of ill-informed minds. Some honest and godly Methodists would not have had their minds poisoned, nor would the faults of other ministers have been laid at the door of one who, because of his solitary eminence, was sometimes made responsible for acts with which he had nothing to do, and transactions the responsibility for which in no way rested upon him.

Dr. Bunting himself, it is needless to say, was a man of strict honour and godly honesty, of frank and friendly temper alike with gentle and simple, a man of the people who never forgot his parentage or did discredit to his humble and godly bringing up, though great men felt honoured by his society and nobles counted it a privilege to call him friend. 'Men there may be,' says Mr. Arthur in the *Christian Times*, 'whom the greatness of another will make bitter and envious. Such men doubtless there are; but oh! let us hope that beings of that kind are in our churches but the pitiable few! Is it in the nature of human things that one individual shall lead vast multitudes for years, and that all he does shall be so perfect that no man shall

strongly and honestly differ, or that all those he outpeers shall be so perfect that they will never misconstrue his motives, or unreasonably attack his plans? Has the Church or the world ever known a case in which such an influence as Dr. Bunting's has not provoked assault? Is it likely ever to see such a case before the days of millennial greatness? Let us not seek the explanation of a fact so natural in a cause so distressing as the one above suggested. And if there be men who cannot forgive another for being great, may God forgive them! . . .

'There he is, after fifty years of hard service, going down towards his rest, with the eyes of the world upon him. He is powerful, but he is poor. From the great Connexion for which he has lived, his sole revenue is a furnished house, coals, candles, and £150 a year. Nor have we ever heard of a living man who professes to know that he sought for more. Yes, there he is, going down to his rest poor; but with what earnest, not to say devoted, love do the men who know him best seem to attend him! We may not live to see it, but before many years the public will be able to judge if those men,

after looking into the grave of Jabez Bunting, will lift up their eyes with the satisfaction of those who are relieved of a tyrant ; or if they will turn those eyes to the world he has left, and ask, “ Where shall we find his like ? ” ’

Dr. Bunting died, after many months of broken health and ebbing strength, on June 16, 1858, having a month before entered his eightieth year. He was, by special permission of the Home Secretary, buried in the graveyard of City Road Chapel, on June 22. His dear—and justly dear—friend, the Rev. John Scott, gave an admirable sketch of his character and life. Then his co-eval, the venerable Dr. Leifchild, delivered an extemporaneous address of great beauty and value, in which he told of his long love and admiration of Dr. Bunting, dating from the time of his first appointment to London. ‘ A young and unmarried man,’ he said, ‘ he came to the Metropolis with a reputation which he soon justified and increased. I never heard such preaching before, and I have never heard such preaching since. It awakened in many of us a passion for preaching. To many he was a model for imitation. He himself, however, was the

imitator of none, and was inimitable by any man. . . . Although I had often heard of his superior power in Conference, I never had a proper idea of the fact till I was accustomed to meet him on committees of the Evangelical Alliance. The wisdom of his suggestions, his counsel, and his advice, was soon perceived and felt, and ever afterwards, as soon as he rose, all was hushed to silence. . . . In the extent of his information, the comprehensiveness of his views, the conclusiveness of his reasoning in debate, and, I will add, the urbanity of his manner, I never saw his equal, and never expect to do so. . . . He was born to rule ; but his rule was not that of an assumed authority. It was the necessary and natural effect of a superior mind over other minds.'

Others spoke—great and wise men—on this affecting occasion, and an admirable record was sent from the committee of the Evangelical Alliance, which may be read in his *Memoir* by Mr. T. P. Bunting and the Rev. G. S. Rowe.

The 'Conference Obituary Record' speaks of Dr. Bunting as a 'great and humble-minded man.' Perhaps no one now living

besides the writer of this little book had the privilege of knowing Dr. Bunting personally and familiarly during the period of his ascendancy as a leader and counsellor. I had, however, myself the privilege of so knowing him, and could find no fitter words to describe his inmost character as I knew him. All Methodist ministers, however, have read the *Liverpool Minutes*, that admirable summary of pastoral duty, that unequalled ideal for a Methodist minister. That was Jabez Bunting's own ideal, and he cannot but be judged by what he aimed at, and could urge on others without any other feeling being moved but that of admiration for not only the wisdom, but the great example of the counsellor. No one, who was not 'humble-minded' as well as 'great' in his own ideal and personal influence, could have inspired and moulded such a model of pastoral character and duty as the *Liverpool Minutes*.

One final paragraph I must add—an expression of heartfelt satisfaction that it has been my privilege to complete this small volume, however inadequate it may be, and in so doing to join my testimony to that of Dr. Gregory and others referred to in the

preceding pages, as to the perfect courtesy and kindness with which Dr. Bunting treated the young ministers with whom he was brought into working or social contact. Dignity with him did not mean austerity or superciliousness. His was the dignity of a father in Christ dealing with junior members of the ministerial family of the Church. As respects myself, I have borne testimony in my little volume of *Reminiscences* ; Dr. Gregory's testimony was published in the official pages of the *Magazine*. Sixty years have all but passed since Dr. Bunting welcomed me from the examination-room to his house and home. For ten years thereafter—till he passed away—we were related to each other as friends, older and younger. In this little book I have tried to do what might be done, within the compass, to make the worth and goodness of the greatest man of middle Methodism known to the great Methodist Church. I am grateful for the privilege.

